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ABSTRACT

Since this background paper is concerned with the formative decision makers, the humanities project is presented through the public statements of the project team in order to convey the nature and quality of the project. Three major decision points provide a framework for curriculum development. First is adoption of an input model that focuses on process education, rather than cognitive learning that answers to behavioral objectives. When used for evaluation the behavioral objectives approach sets up preconceived notions of intended achievements. Advocated in this non-objective approach is the tracing of the different outcomes and the linking of patterns of effects to patterns of teaching. Second is the selection of content. The content has implications for the aim of the project, which is to develop an understanding of social situations and human acts and of the controversial value issues, for student achievement, teacher role and response, and for schools which must be non-authoritarian. Handling controversial issues implies not only a discussion method but, moreover, an objective, democratic teacher. The third decision point is to produce a curriculum which challenges teachers rather than a curriculum which is teacher proof. (Author/SJM)

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT STYLES

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DECISION POINTS IN THE HUMANITIES CURRICULUM PROJECT

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CONFERENCE ON CURRICULUM STYLES

University of Illinois

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Decision points in the Humanities Curriculum Project

The Humanities Curriculum Project: a piece of curriculum research and development sponsored by the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation from 1967 to 1972 as part of the Council's programme in preparation for the raising of the minimum school leaving age in England from 15 years to 16 years in 1972.

This is an example of a project working through a central development team in a de-centralised educational system.

by JEAN RUDDUCK

CONFERENCE ON CURRICULUM STYLES

Decision points in the Humanities Curriculum Project

Style, to me, is something perceived, is consistent, and distinctive.

Decision points determine the structure that gives form to a piece of curriculum development. Major decision points - or perhaps decision areas - will be common to most curriculum projects. If style distinguishes, decision points cannot therefore constitute style in themselves; they make style possible (where style is partly the manner of going about things) or they give insights into style (where style is partly the underlying pattern of thinking and system of values).

At once, the relationship between decisions and decision-makers presents itself. The writer has decided that in this paper she will be concerned with the formative decision makers, and, within that constraint, with the project team ~~with~~ itself. In the Humanities Project some decisions were in fact made by educational policy makers and by the sponsors. Other decision makers might have been considered: teachers working experimentally with the project were also decision makers, largely in matters of implementation, and classroom procedure, and here the decisions varied according to context; at the stage of diffusion, teachers, school principals, parents, employers, publishers, school examination boards, system personnel were also decision makers but their decisions fell mainly in the area of adoption and are therefore largely post-formative.

If the function of this and parallel conference papers is to provide a particular dimension for the exploration of style - that of the curriculum development project - then it is important that the nature and quality of the project is conveyed. A bare selection of decision points could too easily prevent the perception of a style gestalt. To counter the danger of fragmentation, the project is presented as far as possible through the public statements of the project team; present readers may therefore have an opportunity of seeing the project as its potential users (the school, the community, the system) see it. Moreover, the inevitable distorting effect of brevity may be to some measure contained in avoiding further distortion through the mediating interpretation of the writer.

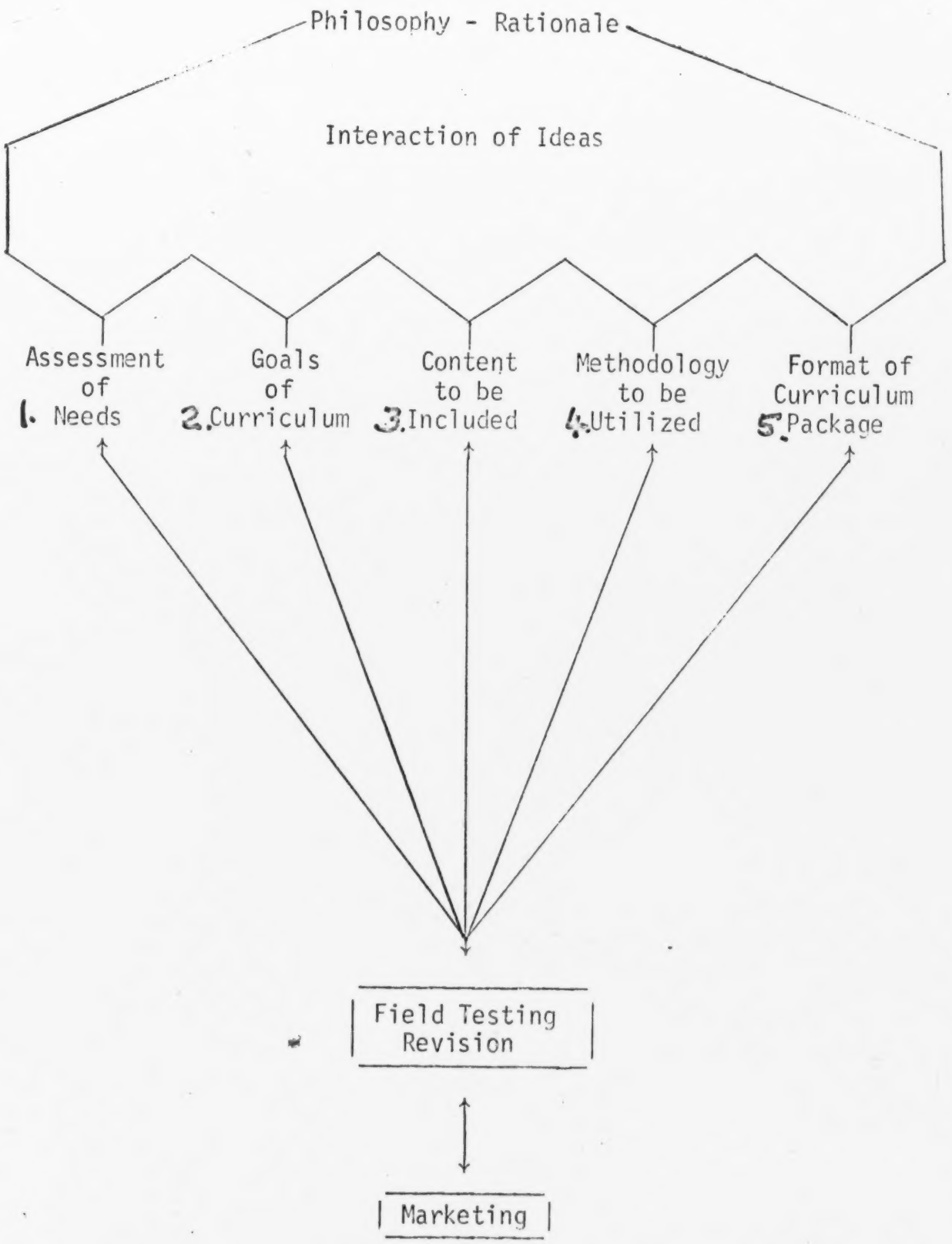
The Humanities Project: a summary

"The central team was asked to provide stimulus, support and materials for teachers and schools teaching the humanities to adolescent students aged 14 to 16. In order to give focus to its research, the central team defined humanities as the study of important human issues. They decided to concentrate on the special problems of work in controversial areas and to give support and produce materials to enable the teacher to meet these problems. The problem, as they saw it, was how to allow adolescents to reach views responsibly without being restricted by the teacher's bias or subjected to undue pressures by their fellows. They approached this problem by attempting to stimulate and study a pattern of small group discussion in which collections of materials (printed prose, verse, drama, photographs, paintings and tapes) were used in a discussion situation which placed both teachers and pupils under the discipline of evidence. They produced collections of materials in such areas as war, education, relations between the sexes, the family, poverty, people and work, race, living in cities and law and order. The role of the central team has been to put forward initial hypotheses about teaching strategies in a discussion situation where the teacher acts as a neutral chairman and a resource consultant. During the years 1968-1970, the first collections were used experimentally in thirty six schools throughout England and Wales. Teachers in those schools were asked to test the suggested rules for discussion to help to shape the work in research and in the creative activities that needed to be built up around the discussion, which was envisaged as a core activity in an open-ended enquiry curriculum. From Easter 1970, revised collections began to be published commercially and training schemes for teachers were set up throughout the country."2

At its maximum the project team consisted of 8 professional staff, with secretarial assistance, and the evaluation team (responsible to the director of the project) of 4 professional staff, with secretarial assistance. The total budget for the project and evaluation was approximately a quarter of a million pounds.

Selection of the major decision points

Gooler and Groteluesch[5] give the following schema of the process of curriculum development.



They identify five major decision points or "major moments" (one to five on the diagram). In the Humanities Project, these five points are less evenly related; the Assessment of Needs decision was made not by the project team but by educational policy makers; the definition of goals was made after the

decision about content, and the methodology and the format of the materials (curriculum package probably implies more than mere format) followed from the decision about content. Two other major decisions for the Humanities Project are located in the areas of philosophy and marketing (marketing - we interpret as diffusion). The three major decison points for the Humanities Project are, then,

i. to adopt an input* rather than an output model and consequently to translate its aim into a logically consonant teaching process rather than into behavioural objectives.

ii. the selection of content.

iii. to attempt to produce a curriculum which challenges teachers rather than a curriculum which is teacher proof.

<u>The three decision points</u>

1. THE DECISION to adopt an input rather than an output model; and consequently to translate its aim into a logically consonant teaching process rather than into behavioural objectives.

The implications of the decision are many;the paper focuses on the implications for evaluation.

(a) <u>documentation of the decision: its dimensions, foundations and justification</u>

"The main interest of our design is the absence of behavioural objectives from the conceptualization and planning of our curriculum."1

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*"The input model is founded on a different logic from the output model. Given an aim couched in terms of knowledge and understanding, it is possible to devise a teaching process and teaching materials which are consistent with that aim. In this case the aim is analysed into learning process or input, rather than into independent learning outcomes or output.

This procedure allows a gradual exploration of the logic and structure of a subject area, both during a curriculum project and by teachers developing project work."1

"A curriculum planner or developer should be able to tell us much more than whether he has achieved objectives. Indeed, in many cases objectives may be measured for him in the examination system, while he himself needs to concentrate far more on aspects which will not be measured in this way. Thus a curriculum worker or a teacher may often be most interested in exploring some of the aspects of a curriculum in practice which puzzle or surprise. Hypotheses are needed here."1

"It is important not to underemphasise undesirable effects, cost effects (e.g. the loss in manipulative skill which we may pay for by increasing understanding of mathematical concepts) and important side effects (e.g. rise in level of aspiration or I.Q.)"1

"I am really arguing that there is no substitute for an understanding of the ways in which curriculum and methods are likely to impact upon students and of the complex of variables that make the settings of individual schools. And once we face that, the objectives approach, which at first looks like a short cut to effective action, becomes an impediment to the development of less simplistic research designs."1

(b) the implications for evaluation

- the problem for evaluation

"In this 'non-objectives' approach there is no ready made niche for the evaluator. He must await events, see what happens, trace the different ways in which the work unfolds and try to link patterns of effects to patterns of teaching. Out-come and process both demand his attention."2

"In curriculum evaluation it is sometimes assumed that what is intended to happen is what actually happens, and that what happens varies little from setting to setting."2

"The impact of an innovation is not a set of discrete effects, but an organically related pattern of acts and consequences. To understand fully a single act one must locate it functionally within that pattern. It follows from this proposition that innovations have many more unanticipated consequences than is normally assumed in development and evaluation designs."2

"As I became aware of the complexity and diversity of what was going on in the experimental schools, I became increasingly sceptical of the notion of confining evaluation to the measurement of intention achievement."2

"I could not understand the causes of the behaviour which I had observed in discussion groups. Why were the differences between schools in this respect so much more marked than the differences within schools? Why was one group of pupils enthusiastic about the work, and a group with similar formal characteristics in another school so hostile? Other questions accumulated as one began to seek contexual clues. Why were some staff groups supportive of the Project, others indifferent, still others openly hostile? Why did some schools react in dissimilar ways to apparently similar problems? A host of questions like these arose as the diversity of institutional, teacher and pupil response unfolded."2

- <u>the function of evaluation</u>

"the goals and purposes of the programme developers are not necessarily shared by its users."2

"At the present time we see our task as that of feeding the judgement of decision-makers by promoting understanding of the considerations that bear upon curricular action."2

"To ascertain the effects of the project, document the circumstances in which they occur, and present this information in a form which will help educational decision-makers to evaluate the likely consequences of adopting the programme."2

- <u>the design of the evaluation at the experimental stage</u>

"My aim at that stage was simply to describe the work of the Project in a form which would make it accessible to public and professional judgement. In view of the potential significance of so many aspects of the Project, I felt I should commit myself initially to a complete description of its experience and to making myself aware of the full range of relevant phenomena. Evaluation design, strategies and tactics would, I hoped, evolve in response to the impact of the Project on the system and the structure of the evaluation problems which that impact would throw up."2

- <u>the design of the evaluation at the diffusion stage</u>

"The idea is to study in some detail over a period of time the experience of a small number of schools, while gathering sufficient information about what is happening in a large number of schools to permit interpretation from one sample to the other. The design looks like this:

a) <u>In the large sample of schools</u> (c.100)

(i) Gathering input, contextual and implementation data by questionnaire.

(ii) Gathering judgement data from teachers and pupils.

(iii) Objective measurement of teacher and pupil change.

(iv) Tracing variations in teaching practice through the use of specially devised multiple-choice feedback instruments which require minimal effort by teacher and are monitored by pupils.

(v) Documenting the effect on the school by means of semi-structured teacher diaries.

(b) In small sample of schools (c.12)

(i) Case studies of patterns of decision making, communication, training and support in local areas.

(ii) Case studies of individual schools within these areas.

(iii) Study of the dynamics of discussion by audiotape, videotape and observation."2

2. THE DECISION about content

The paper traces the implications for the aim and for the reassessment of student achievement; for teacher role and teacher strategy; for the compilation of collections of materials; for school and teacher response.

a. documentation of the decision: the problem, the dimensions, the justification

"There is no generally accepted definition of the Humanities in Britain* but the range of subjects specified to us includes English, history, geography, social studies and religious studies."1

"A helpful oversimplification would be to define the humanities as an inter-relation of the approaches and attitudes of the social scientist, the artist, and the man of religion."1

"Following up policy statements made by educationists and official reports, we saw humanities teaching as a possible response to the demand that the curriculum offered to adolescents should be relevant and that schools should face controversial issues with these students in an honest and adult way."1

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* "In one Scottish University, the professor of Humanity teaches Latin."1

"The selection of content for a humanities curriculum should be justifiable as being educationally worthwhile. With adolescents the main emphasis will naturally fall on important human issues of widespread and enduring significance. The criterion for selection is not that students are immediately interested in such issues - though they may be - but that they ought to be interested; and the school has the task of interesting them."1

"The following issues were selected by the Project for experimental study: war; education; the family; relations between the sexes; poverty; people and work; living in cities; law and order; and race relations."1

b. the implications of content

- for the aim

"The aim of the Project is: to develop an understanding of social situations and human acts and of the controversial value issues which they raise."

the implications of content and aim

- for teacher role and teacher strategy

"the crucial problem in handling human issues is that they are controversial."1

"By a controversial issue we mean one which divides students, parents and teachers because it involves an element of value judgement which prevents the issues being settled by evidence and experiment."1

"How is a democracy in its schools to handle controversial issues?"1

"A century ago the impulse would have been to teach on the basis of authority in an attempt to produce social consensus in these areas."1

"A teacher might aspire to neutrality in teaching controversial issues. Precisely because he is aware of the bias of his own commitment, he might attempt to adopt the convention of procedural neutrality in the classroom discussion. As students often put it, the teacher may agree not to take sides in their discussion. There remains the acute technical problem of devising a teacher strategy which meets the criterion of neutrality and is also effective in the classroom."

"The considerations outlined above suggested that the basic teaching strategy should be one of discussion rather than instruction. The demand that the teacher should be neutral on the issues under discussion but committed to certain procedural values suggested an analogy with the traditional concept of the neutral chairman."1

"Given this line of thinking it is clearly not possible for the chairman to be the source of information for the discussion group in his own person since his transmission of information will inevitably be coloured or at least limited by his own views. Accordingly, it was conceived that information might come into the group in the shape of evidence, which is accessible to scrutiny and criticism."1

- <u>for the reassessment of what is appropriate for the less-able student</u>.

"In broad terms the objective will be to provide for the majority of pupils, something of the quality and range of liberal education hitherto reserved for the minority of more academically-minded pupils, and todo this in terms which are intellectually sound while at the same time interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs."1

"The kind of materials we offer and the method of discussion, are equally suitable for any "adult" - from a school leaver through sixth former to university student."1

"Pupils of average academic ability can achieve intellectual levels in this work which indicate that they have been greatly underestimated."1

"It is this transition from dependency to responsibility which is the main purpose of this kind of teaching."1

- <u>the impact of all the foregoing implications on teachers and schools</u>

"This new pattern of teaching radically changes teacher-pupil relationships and has profound implications for the authority structure of the school. Schools are not likely to succeed in the changeover if they won't face a move from authoritarianism."1

"The practical implications of this aim, in terms of pupil and teacher roles and relationships, meant setting up in many schools a pattern of behaviour in conflict with established assumptions and habits."2

"There may be schools which would be ill-advised, either because of the traditional ethos of the institution or because of its particular stage of development, to become involved in the kind of experiment which this Project offers. All schools should be aware of its implications for change: more immediately, in the role of the teacher and his relationship with pupils; ultimately, in the definition of authority and in the way it relates to individual responsibility, both within and outside the school."3

3. THE DECISION to attempt to produce a curriculum which challenges teachers rather than one which is teacher-proof

The decision has implications for the training of teachers, for teachers' independence of the project team, for the pattern of national communication, induction and follow-up.

a. documentation of the decision: the foundation, the challenge.

"There can be no effective and far-reaching curriculum development without teacher development."4

"A curriculum may be static or dynamic. A static curriculum implies an attempt to set up a closely defined course and to hold it constant. A dynamic curriculum implies an attempt to set up a course which will change within a framework of constant high level principles as the teacher develops insight and skills. A static curriculum inclines to be "teacher-proof." A dynamic curriculum rests on teacher development and hence on the quality of teachers.

On the whole, it would appear that a relatively dynamic curriculum should be the aspiration of research and development projects. The more dynamic a curriculum the more it will help a teacher to be articulate about his purposes, capable of analysing his work and self-critical. Such a curriculum is conducive to the development of professionalism in the best sense and often has effects which transfer throughout a teacher's work. The investment in curriculum projects is so heavy that we must look for this generalisation of effect wherever possible."1

"We adopted a research plan based upon the specification of a procedure of teaching which should embody the value implied in the aim in a form which could be realized in the classroom. This means that the changes which we specify are not changes in terminal student behaviour but in the criteria to which teachers work in the classroom."1

"It places a heavy burden on the teacher, who is responsible for seeing to it that what he does in the classroom is consistent with the aim and pedagogically effective."2

"This conception of what a research and development project can offer to a teacher increases his responsibility both for choice and for thoughtful action: but it also tries to offer him support in shouldering that responsibility. Research and development should be an instrument of the professional teacher, not his master."1

"To bring out the potential of this work in the classroom will demand considerable thought and professional skill from teachers."1

b. the implications

- for the re-training of teachers

"It would appear that almost all schools and teachers are more authoritarian than they realise. Many of the teachers found themselves locked in role conflicts, or in attempts to bridge an unforeseen credibility gap betwenn themselves and their pupils."2

"The teachers did not anticipate the extent to which many pupils had developed, in their previous schooling, a 'trained' incapacity for this work, nor the depth of alienation from any kind of curriculum offering which many pupils felt, nor the degree to which they themselves and their pupils had been successfully socialised into a tradition of teacher dominance and custodial attitudes."2

"It would be wrong to minimize the difficulty of the transition that teachers are required to make if they are to master their role in this style of discussion. They will need all the help that they can get."1

"Teachers are not likely to succeed without some retraining."1

- for teachers' understanding of their role in relation to the project team

"From the teacher's point of view the ethos of the Project was evangelical rather than exploratory, and the suggested teaching strategies looked like tests of teacher proficiency rather than research hypotheses. Many felt on trial."2

"It was important for the success of the Project that teachers should understand this position, should see themselves as creators of curriculum change and not mere spectators."2

"It was attempting to operationalise an attitude towards curriculum which stressed teacher responsibility and judgement, as against an attitude which sees the development team as educational leaders who dispense expertise from a position of authority."2

"Ultimately one must have teachers who participate in the management of their own development. But there is a tendency in curriculum development programmes which are centrally organised for teachers to invest the development team with the kind of authority which can atrophy independence of judgement in individual school settings. Probably some degree of authority or charisma from a body external to the school is necessary to stimulate re-thinking of curriculum activity. Once the development project is under way, however, the authority becomes dysfunctional and can create either a cult or a rebellion; teachers look to the development team for answers, and this reliance on authority implies that there is little independent self-criticism in the innovatory approach. On the other hand, the development team's concern to impart an understanding of procedure as it relates to theory can release the professional judgement and imagination of teachers:*'Failure to grasp underlying principles leads to unintelligent rule-of-thumb application of rules and the inability to make exceptions on relevant grounds and to bewilderment in novel situations."4

*What is an Educational Process? R.S.Peters in The Concept of Education (ed. Peters) Routledge and Kegan Paul 1967 p.6

- for diffusion: the challenge

"It is a project which is demanding of resources and skills, and carries high disturbance potential - and therefore high resistance potential."4

"The project, at first glance, seemed to have many of the earmarks of the past innovation failures. It required induction courses for teachers, it was difficult to use, it was costly in terms of school resources, it conflicted with established values. In short, the Project showed distinct promise as a case-study in the pathology of innovation, from symptoms to post-mortem."2

- for the pattern of diffusion

"Teachers who are interested in developing the work along the lines explored during the experimental period need to attend an induction course. One of the problems of diffusion is that there is no control over the purchase of materials. The responsibility of the project is to see that induction courses are therefore widely available. Another problem of diffusion is that the development team is small and has a limited life-span. Our interpretation of responsibility for diffusion was that by the end of the funding there should be people across the country with sufficient interest, understanding, energy and commitment to experimentation to ensure that the project would have a continuity in which teachers would look critically at the work and constantly re-examine criteria for classroom response and for the quality

of the work. The pattern of diffusion took this form:

i. central information meetings for Heads and school system personnel.

ii. local information meetings for interested teachers.

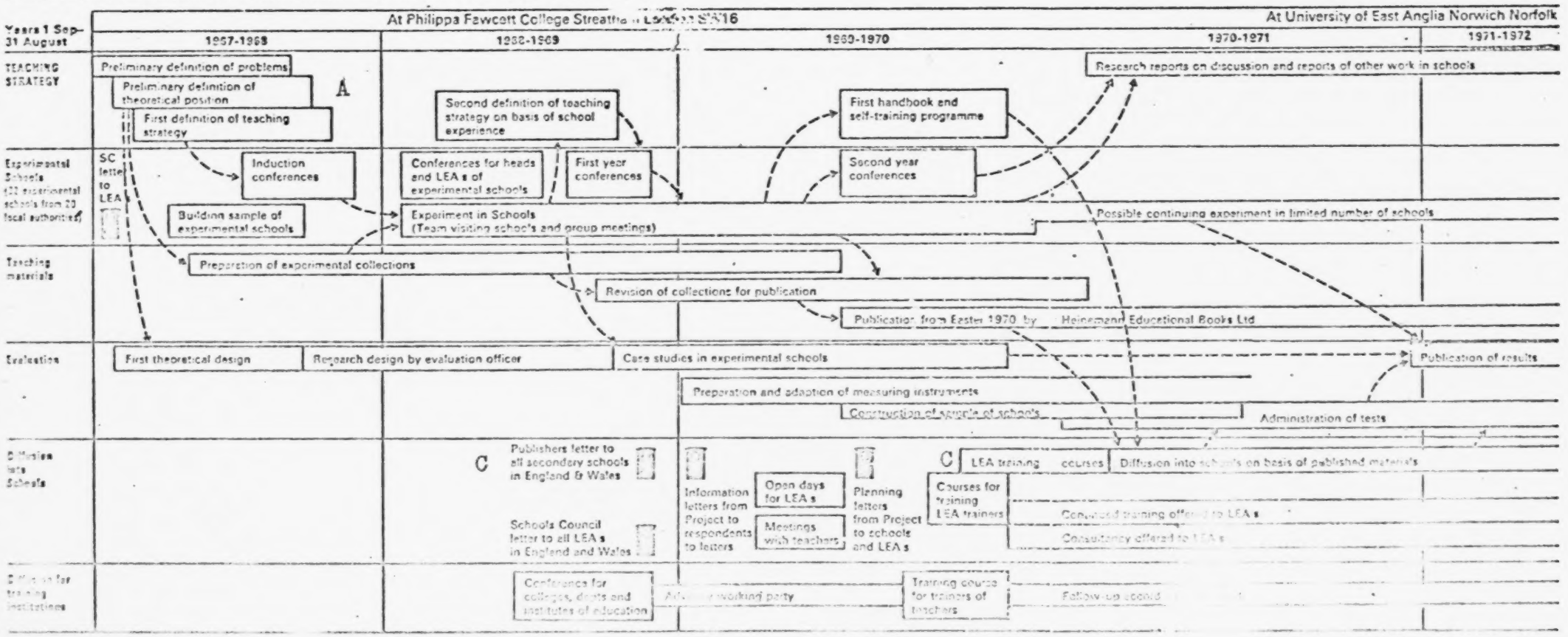
iii. the selection of local training teams and their attendance at centrally organised induction courses.

iv. local training of interested teachers by the centrally inducted training team.

v. regular local follow-up meetings of groups of teachers working on the project.

vi. local repetition, using the growing local experience, of stages ii., iv, and v."3

The Schools Council and Nuffield Foundation Humanities Curriculum Project


At Philippa Fawcett College Streatham London SW16
At University of East Anglia Norwich Norfolk
Years 1 Sep–31 August
1967-1968
1968-1969
1969-1970
1970-1971
1971-1972
TEACHING STRATEGY
Preliminary definition of problems
Preliminary definition of theoretical position
First definition of teaching strategy
A
Second definition of teaching strategy on basis of school experience
First handbook and self-training programme
Research reports on discussion and reports of other work in schools
Experimental Schools (32 experimental schools from 20 local authorities)
SC letter to LEA
Induction conferences
Building sample of experimental schools
Conferences for heads and LEA s of experimental schools
First year conferences
Second year conferences
Experiment in Schools (Team visiting school's and group meetings)
Possible continuing experiment in limited number of schools
Teaching materials
Preparation of experimental collections
Revision of collections for publication
Publication from Easter 1970 by Heinemann Educational Books Ltd
Evaluation
First theoretical design
Research design by evaluation officer
Case studies in experimental schools
Publication of results
Preparation and adaption of measuring instruments
Construction of sample of schools
Administration of tests
C Liaison with Schools
C
Publishers letter to all secondary schools in England & Wales
Schools Council letter to all LEA s in England and Wales
Information letters from Project to respondents to letters
Open days for LEA s
Meetings with teachers
Planning letters from Project to schools and LEA s
C
LEA training courses
Diffusion into schools on basis of published materials
Courses for training LEA trainers
Consultancy offered to LEA s
C Liaison for training institutions
Conference for colleges, depts and institutes of education
Advisory working party
Training course for trainers of teachers
Follow-up course

The decision points are all located at A
"Although the central team's general position in these areas (at A) was reasonably clear at the design stage, it was not until its policies became operationalised in the school system during the 1968 to 1970 experiment that the implications and consequences could be appreciated, and the related technical problems articulated."2

Sources

1. articles and papers by Lawrence Stenhouse, Director of the Project. They include:

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- Values of the Curriculum, A report of the Fourth International Curriculum Conference, pub. N.E.A. and C.S.I.

- Some Limitations of the Use of Objectives in Curriculum Research and Planning Paedagogica Europea 1971

- An Introduction to Curriculum Study (draft chapter)

- Pupils into Students? Dialogue (Schools Council Newsletter 5)

- Open-minded teaching New Society, July 1969

2. papers by Barry MacDonald, Director of Evaluation Studies. They include:

- Briefing Decision-makers- the evaluation of the Humanities Curriculum Project, a paper for the Schools Council.

- A Wholistic Approach presented to the Annual meeting of A.E.R.A. February 1971.

3. papers by Jean Rudduck, Schools Officer and responsible for the diffusion of the project. They include:

- Organising the Project in Schools, a project publication.

- Diffusion of the Project, an internal paper.

4. Paper by Jean Rudduck and Barry MacDonald, Barriers to Success, British Journal of Educational Psychology. Spring 1971.

5. Dennis D. Gooler and Arden Grotelueschen, Process Accountability in Curriculum, a draft paper for C.I.R.C.E., University of Illinois.